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SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: GERMANS SHARE U.S. CONCERNS OVER HUMANITARIAN  
CRISIS IN EAST AFRICA

REF: STATE 70789

¶1. (SBU) Embassy Berlin A/DCM conveyed U.S. concerns over the urgent humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya to State Secretary Peter Ammon of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He urged Germany to join the United States in stepping up contributions to avoid a further deterioration of conditions in the region.

¶2. (SBU) In a companion meeting, Bernhard Kampmann, Head of the Humanitarian Task Force, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told Embassy Berlin Acting Economic Minister-Counselor that Germany shared U.S. concerns and had a similar assessment of the situation. Germany has pushed the EU to focus more on East Africa, Kampmann explained. Germany provides 20 percent of the EU's humanitarian assistance to the region, which has thus far this year totaled 13 million euros in Somalia, 11 million euros in Kenya, and 6 million euros in Ethiopia. Kampmann said this was about half what the EU planned to spend for the year. As for bilateral contributions, Kampmann said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will provide 4.7 million euros for Somalia and 1 million euros for Kenya in 2009. There has not yet been a contribution for Ethiopia this year.

Kampmann confirmed that the MFA has primary responsibility for emergency humanitarian assistance, while the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) generally focuses on longer-term projects.

¶3. (SBU) Germany is "strong on the ground" in Somalia, according to Kampmann, and would like the EU to focus more on the country. He said the EU's Political and Security Committee (PSC) discusses Somalia at every meeting, and that the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) will take it up in September. Germany is helping to reconstruct a hospital in Puntland, and is contributing to a 1-million euro project to improve the port of Mogadishu geared towards facilitating World Food Program (WFP) distribution. He added that the EU's ATALANTA mission, to which Germany contributes, also provides protection for the WFP. Kampmann remarked that the USG is demonstrating a higher level of support for the Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG), and Germany is following the U.S. lead. Kampmann said Germany will "look for additional funds for Somalia," and will also "push the EU to do more."

¶4. (SBU) Kampmann acknowledged a shortfall in funding for the Common Appeals Process (CAP) for Somalia, but noted the problem with security for distribution. Germany supports 142,000 Somali refugees at a desert camp in east Yemen, however, as well as urban refugees in Aiden. There are currently 250,000-280,000 refugees in a Kenyan camp built for 100,000. It might be an advantage if the CAP were regional rather than country-specific, said Kampmann. He added that he plans to raise this idea in Geneva when he travels there for the final ECOSOC meetings this week. (COMMENT: Germany seems to prefer looking at funding for Somalia on a regionalized basis, as this would reflect a more robust German approach to the Somali refugee crisis.)

¶5. (SBU) Kampmann had the impression that the United States emphasized food assistance at the expense of medical assistance. Noting our higher contributions to the former, he inquired as to the reasons for the discrepancy. Acting EMIN detailed U.S. contributions on the medical side as provided in reftel and assured German interlocutors that both objectives are important to the U.S. Post would appreciate further guidance on Kampmann's question.

¶6. (SBU) Reftel points were also shared with contacts at the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and Agriculture Ministry (BMELV); Embassy will provide additional information as it becomes available.  
Bradtke